

Wrath

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Summary: Hiccup finally returns to the archipelago, eight years after he left. Some of experiences while away have left him unstable, and the actions of one stubborn Viking have deadly repercussions.

Involves multiple character deaths. Trigger Warning: Violence, death, mental issues, torture.

1. The End

Alvin could barely believe their luck. They had approached under cover of darkness, and they hadn't been spotted. The watch fires were dark, and they glided silently through the night. Berk wasn't going to know what hit it. Until it was over that is, then they would definitely know exactly who had beaten them, He'd make sure of it!

Glancing at his crew, he felt a swell of pride. In the years since he'd been banished, he'd taken control of all the disparate outcast groups, forging them into a single unit. Every one of those with him tonight was a seasoned veteran, used to fighting Vikings, Dragons, and anyone else in their way. Everything he was, he'd earned. Defeating Stoick would finally prove that he was by far the better leader.

As they reached the docks, he gave the signal and the men began removing the cloths used to muffle weapons and armour with an ease that spoke of familiarity and practice. Another signal was given and they leapt onto the docks, giving voice to their battle-cries. Alvin led the charge of almost a hundred seasoned warriors, none of whom were prepared for what waited for them.

Their magnificent charge faltered and stopped as the men gazed around in fear and revulsion. The village of Berk was no more. In its place was a charnel house from the depths of Niflheim itself. Even Alvin was shocked, though he didn't want to show it. Ordering the men to split into groups of no less than five, he and his guards made their way to the great hall as the others began looting. As they walked, the scale of the devastation became more apparent. There was no life

left. Young, old, warrior or baker, they were all dead. Few were mutilated, which suggested it had not been a dragon attack, but then why were some burned, while others bore blade wounds?

With a knot of fear growing in his chest, they ascended the steps to the hall, but before they entered one of the men gave a gasp and pointed, looking up in horror. Snotlout Jorgensen, Heir to the Hairy Hooligans, was dead. The pained grimace on what was left of his face spoke of the horrors he had endured before finally succumbing to his wounds. Someone, or something, had ripped out his eyes before impaling him with some sort of hook and suspending him from the wooden dragon head adorning the doors of the Hall. He dangled there, like bait on a fishing rod, twisting gently in the breeze, proclaiming to all that death had come to Berk.

Wrenching his gaze away and ignoring cries from his crew to return to the boats, Alvin pushed open the doors to the Hall, only to see the remains of his onetime friend and longtime enemy lying across the central table. As he stared in horror, the mass of broken flesh gasped out a single word.

'Run'

As the outcasts turned to flee from these cursed shores, a shadow rose to meet them, and screams once again echoed around the shores of Berk.

2. A Beginning

'Ready to go bud?'

Toothless warbled his assent. He was eager to return, though for different reasons. Hiccup had never really recovered from the death of his mate and had been reckless. His recklessness had left him with a fake leg, and he had been teetering on the brink of a terrible abyss for a long time. Toothless knew he was the most feared dragon in the world so nothing would harm his rider while he still drew breath, but how do you protect your friend from their own mind?

Nuzzling Hiccup, he started to prance around causing the young man to give an exasperated sigh.

'C'mon Bud, stop messing around and let's go!'

Refusing to listen, Toothless instead pounced on the boy, and covered his face in saliva.

'Toothless! You know that doesn't wash out!'

Toothless didn't mind, Hiccup was smiling again and that was all that mattered. He too would like to get going, so he stood still while the rest of the gear was packed, and they shot off into the deep blue sky.

* * *

><p>There could be no graves, not here. What little ground didn't freeze was needed for farming or grazing. For the famous and the

powerful a crypt would be built, either hewn from the ground, or converted natural caves. Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third had not been a famous hero. He had no crypt, and he had not had a pyre " what would have been the point? His disappearance had been noticed by few, and he had been mourned by fewer.
And yet, someone had. Here, on a rocky bluff overlooking the ocean, there was a small, simple monument. No more than an elaborate cairn, with a plaque of polished granite inscribed with his name. It wasn't much, but it was all they had. For Stoick, it was the last link to a family that he'd failed to protect. For Gobber, it was a shrine to an apprentice who had practically been a son. For those who had grown up with him, it was nothing more than a reminder of everything a Viking should not be.

The strain of losing both his wife and his son had almost broken the chief. For weeks he had seemed a hollow shell of a man, unable to function properly. Then a raid had come, and his grief and rage had been unleashed. There were few draconic survivors. A crusade of blood and death had begun that day. Hunting parties were sent out, sweeping Berk clean of dragons so that not even a single Terror remained.

>Gobber had gone through Hiccup's room at the forge and with just a few tweaks there was a whole new arsenal of dragon killing equipment. There were giant crossbows, bola cannons, as well as faster, lighter catapults and trebuchets. He told no-one where the designs came from, and was silent when questioned about them. He didn't understand all of the designs, and knew that the village would never accept anything made by 'Hiccup the Useless', even though most of their 'prized' weapons had been made by the lad.<p>

3. The Return

**Thank you for your kind reviews. I still welcome any and all suggestions for improvement. I warn you now, this is the last chapter before things get dark.**

With every wingbeat the familiar shoreline came a little closer. With every wingbeat his stomach twisted, and dread rose in his throat. Yes, he wasn't the same boy who'd left all those years ago, but were they the same villagers? Was his da.. was Stoick still in charge? Snotlout would be the Heir now, what was that like? He couldn't imagine they'd stopped killing dragons, not for one second.

'Nearly there. This isn't going to be easy, is it?'

A mournful warble answered him. After all these years, with just a few days apart they were less like two beings, and more like one soul in two bodies. Neither could imagine life without the other, and they understood each other on a level unmatched by anyone else, not evenâ€|

No. Hiccup shook his head, refusing to follow that thought. He couldn't think of her, it was too painful. Remembering what some of his masters had taught him, he embraced the flame and the void. The void was empty and still, and he poured every emotion, every stray thought into the flame until there was nothing, only the peace of the void. His breathing grew steady once more. Coldly, he realised that his pain was something he could use. Stoick may never have had much use for him, but he had loved his wife. That was something they had

in common now. It was a way in, as well as a way to avoid actually talking about anything.

'It's okay bud. I'm okay. Let's do a high-level flyby to get some idea about what's happening to the village, then head for the cove okay?'

Toothless merely grunted in response, and slapped him with his ear flaps. He understood Hiccup was nervous, but that was the umpteenth time they'd gone over the plan! As they glided along, they were able to just enjoy the afternoon sunlight playing through the mountains of their once home. Passing over the village, Hiccup was more than a little surprised to note the stronger defences. They seemed to be based on some of his old designs, but that couldn't be right. There was no way that the same village that had named him Useless (a title that hung around his neck like a millstone) would be relying on something he had created. A grim smile flitted across his face. Of course, it must be Gobber. The older smith would have found the designs and claimed them as his own. It was something he had been doing for years. He had always tried not to mind, as it was for the sake of the village, but he could hardly deny that it hurt. Little had changed beyond the new defences, and although the rest of the village was broadly the same, Hiccup did notice that everything was looking a bit ragged and worn. He couldn't help but feel a flicker of satisfaction that the village that had shunned and hated him for so many years was crumbling. They were obviously on their last legs, which should play into his plans. Desperate people were usually easier to convince. They would have to accept him, they had no other options left.

As they descended, Hiccup saw something and grinned.

'Hey Toothless, you remember when we were learning together and found that patch of grass you like? Well, I just spotted it, fancy the detour?'

An excited warble and a gummy smile was all the reply he needed. They banked into a swooping arc, and landed next to an odd mound. After removing Toothless' flight gear and watching him roll around like the ridiculous reptile he was, Hiccup turned to inspect the obviously artificial monument. What he saw dropped him to his knees.

'I guessâ€¦ I guess someone did care after all'.

4. The First Reunion

His shoulders began to shake, and tears welled in his eyes. Just before the dam broke and swamped him in emotion, something emerged from the trees, and a voice he hadn't heard in years rang out.

'How dare you?! Get away from that grave you devil!'

Hiccup scrambled to his feet, realising that he still wore his armour. It was a blend of designs and materials, allowing for freedom of movement and protection. Every aspect of it was designed to intimidate opponents, from the colouring to the spiked helm. With shaking hands, he reached up and removed his helmet.

* * *

><p>In the grass, Toothless was lolling around with his tongue out when he heard a voice from the trees. The hostility in that voice brought him to an instant alert, and he began creeping through the long grass. He trusted his rider, they had come here to talk after all, but he was going to be ready if anything went wrong.<p>

* * *

><p>Stoick watched the stranger warily. He wore no crest on his strange black armour, and while he was skinny he held himself like a warrior. Why was this stranger on his island, and what was he doing to his son's grave?<p>

'Well? Who are you?'

Without a word, the stranger lifted his helmet, and looked him square in the eye. Stoick's knees trembled with shock, and for a long moment he just gazed at the impossibility before him.

'Butâ€¦ No! It can't be! Youâ€¦ you're dead!'

Tears welled in his eyes and he dropped to his knees.

'Why? Have you come back to taunt me? I failed your mother, and I failed you. I'm sorry sonâ€¦ I'm so sorry.'

He hunched over, finally letting out the sobs he'd held in for so long. He'd held himself together for so long, first for Hiccup, then for the village but with his failure now staring him in the face he could no longer help himself.

'Dâ€¦ Dad? It's okay, I'm real. I'm not here to hurt you, I've come home'

Hiccup was surprised to note the tremor in his own voice, he had thought himself burned out, incapable of true emotion after... her. Stoick looked up at him with tearstained eyes and an uncertain face.

'H-Home?' he choked.

'Home. If-If you'll have me that is'

At this, confusion spread across his father's features, and he seemed to gather himself.

'Hiccupâ€¦ Son. You've been gone so long, we thought you were dead. I thought, I thought I'd failed you the same way I failed your mother. But you're back. My son is back.'

With this, he choked again and Hiccup realised just how badly he'd misjudged his father. Stoick had loved him, and what had he done? He'd left, let them think he was dead. He'd been wrong all these years. With this realisation, the walls in his head and in his head broke, just a little. Dropping to his own knees, he embraced the man he'd hated all these years, and decided that maybe, just maybe, things could work out.

* * *

><p>Crouched in the bushes, Toothless was watching. As he saw them embrace he let slip a soft coo of happiness, overcome with emotion seeing his friend reunite with his nest. And that is where it all went wrong.<p>

Stoick stiffened upon hearing the noise, and rose to his feet. Hiccup rose too, taking note of his father's stance.

'Dad, I need you to relax. I'm not alone.'

Without the slightest change in posture, Stoick whirled round and shot a quizzical glance at his son.

'I didn't know what to expect remember? I thought I might have been declared outcast, so my friends thought it would be safer if I had company.'

A hurt glance flickered across his father's face, but was quickly replaced by one of resigned understanding. He knew what his son had risked by returning.

* * *

><p>Toothless saw none of this. All he saw was a heavily armed Viking whirling towards his rider. Knowing that the big Viking before him had hurt Hiccup in the past, he decided to intervene.<p>

Leaping from the bushes, he bared his teeth and growled as menacingly as possible.

Stoick didn't pause. He'd lost his son once before, there was no way he was going to let some demon take him away, not when he'd just got Hiccup back! In one smooth movement he threw Hiccup behind him and drew his axe.

Seeing his friend brutally thrown across the ground, Toothless howled and ran towards the chief.

Hiccup fell heavily and struck his head against something hard. He couldn't move, couldn't even cry out.

Stoick ran forwards to meet the black demon, determined to keep it away from his son at all costs. He was the greatest warrior on Berk, a father, and he was fuelled by a righteous rage.

Toothless could smell the blood in the air. He was the Alpha, the fear in the night, the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself, and this creature had dared to hurt his friend!

As Hiccup's vision dimmed, he saw everything.

He saw Toothless inhale, bringing in the gasses needed for his powerful blast.

He saw his father leaping, his axe ready to strike.

As the darkness claimed him and his heart was torn asunder, he saw one final thing.

He saw the axe bite deep.

5. Chapter 5

Stoick stood, and his breath trembled. He had thought it was over, no-one survives the Night Fury. Yes, the glow had been unmistakable, it was definitely a Night Fury. As his breathing steadied, the world came rushing back in. The soft murmuring of the sea, the trilling of the birds in the forest and

'Hiccup!' Stoick whirled, desperate to see his son again, to know that he hadn't dreamed him. His eyes fell on the prone figure of his only son, and his heart stopped all over again. Rushing over, he cradled his son's limp body to him and let the tears flow all over again. He had done this, flinging his son like some rag-doll. As he held his son close, he felt something tickle his cheek.

'Could it be?' Hope began to fill him. Hiccup was breathing, albeit shallowly. Rising to his feet, Stoick started to jog towards the village. His son had only just returned, he was not going to lose him now. He ran and ran, and even when his vision began to tunnel and go black around the edges, he ran.

Still running, he reached the edges of the village. As he neared the houses, he raised his voice to call for Gobber, for Gothi, for anyone! Realising how little strength he had left, Stoick collapsed against the nearest wall and sank slowly to the floor. Thankfully, the villagers heard his call, and it wasn't long before Phlegma the Fierce arrived. She took one look at the limp bundle in his arms before turning and running straight to the Elder's house. As Gobber (along with several curious villagers) arrived, Stoick gathered enough strength to speak.

'Gobber, I need you and Spitelout to form a party and take them up to Hiccup's bluff. There's a dead dragon up there, and I want you to tell me whether it really is that damned Night Fury.'

At this, there was a collective gasp from the onlookers, and several started murmuring to themselves. Stoick was a great warrior, but could even he take down the offspring of lightning and death itself? Gobber may well have been shocked, but he knew the look in his friend's eye, and turned to the crowd.

'You heard the man! You, find Spitelout and tell him to get his arse to the plaza as quick as he can. I'll need the rest of you to get your weapons and meet me at the plaza. I'm not waiting on any of ye!'

Turning back to his friend he finally saw what Stoick was carrying.

"Stoickâ€¦ Who is tha'? Where did ye find him? Is he alone?"

Realising that he was overloading the obviously tired chief, he cut himself short. Stoick lifted his head to look him in the eye and said:

"It's Hiccup. It's my son. He's come home."

Gobbers eyebrows hot up in surprise and the world seemed to rock on it's axis. When he finally found his tongue, and saw that it really was Hiccup, all he could say was;

"Oh boy"

6. A Discovery

Stoick sat, watching Gothi attend to his son. He could still barely believe it. He wasn't sure that he did believe it, even with the evidence of his own eyes. He almost wished that he hadn't sent Gobber away, he understood Gothi better than anyone else. Still, he hadn't been hit too many times as he tried to understand what was going on, so that was a result. From what he could understand, she expected Hiccup to awake sometime the next day. He sighed heavily, and cupped his head in his hands. Even after eight long years, Hiccup still looked soâ€¦ frail. He was taller, and had certainly gotten broader and leaner, but when you compared him to a Vikingâ€¦ He sighed again, studying his son once more. Hiccup's face - that was where the real changes were. He had lost the soft youthfulness he'd had before he left. He looked older, but more importantly, he looked harder, tougher. Even in repose there was an edge to his expression.
>What had his son gone through to change him so?<p>

Before he could sink further into thought, he heard the unmistakable sound of Gobber walking across wood. Despite the situation, Stoick managed a little grin. Even after all these years Gobber had never quite figured out how Stoick always knew it was him approaching. He stood, opened the door and stepped out so to not disturb Gothi or Hiccup.

"Well Gobber, what did you find?" Gobber looked grim.

"Is it him? Are ye sure?" Stoick nodded;

"Aye, I'm sure. I know my own son Gobber"

>The one-handed smith shifted uncomfortably.<p>

"Weeellâ€¦ ye're not gonna like what we found. It was definitely a Night Fury butâ€¦"

"But what Gobber?" Stoick asked, allowing a hint of frustration into his voice.

"It's easier if ye see fer yerself. I don't know how to explain it. I'm not even sure I can"

"Gobber, my son who has just returned after eight years is lying unconscious in that bed. I don't have time for games!"

It was Gobber's turn to look serious.

"Oh, this is nae game Stoick. You need to see this, and decide what to do. Quickly too, what we found is causin a stir already."

With that, he turned and began descending back to the ground. Stoick grumbled, but followed. As they walked towards the smithy Gobber began to explain a little more.

"Ye see Stoick, when we were on our way up to the cliff, I sent half the group to search for Hiccup's boat, thinkin that he musta come from somewhere, right? Only, they haven't found anything. And then there's what we found on the dragonâ€¦"

As the rounded the back of the forge, Stoick was more than a little astounded to see that they'd actually dragged the dragon all the way back.

"We had to bring it back as we didn't think we'd ever get another chance to get a good look at a Night Fury. Fishlegs is already updatin the Book o' Dragons. And ye could always mount the head if ye wanted. I'd leave the axe in there personally, gives it a, you know, an artistic touch."

"Gobber. What. Did. You. Want. To. Show. Me?"

"ah right. Yeah. Well, while we were lookin' at the beastie, we realised it only had one tailfin, see there? Yeah, well as ye know, a downed dragon is a dead dragon, so we figured it must have bin hidin someplace nearby. So we went looking, and we foundâ€¦ well we found this."

He gestured at what seemed at first to be a pile of scrap metal and leather. As he started pulling out what was obviously a saddle of some sort, a fake tailfin, and other paraphernalia, the realisation of what this meant hit Stoick hard. The stress of the day had already been taking a toll, but this was too much. His legs folded up and Stoick the Vast, mighty warrior chief of the Hairy Hooligan tribe, fainted dead away.

7. Goals and Maps

Although Gothi had predicted his awakening that day, Hiccup showed no outward signs of stirring. Inside was another matter. He dreamed and raged and burned with fire. He walked through hellish nightmare-scapes and saw the demons of his past. Every step he took showed another failure, another face. He walked through fields of ash and ruin. He re-lived the siege of Vienna, re-fought the battle of Red Cliffs in China, and Saw a Queen bury Pompeii in her death. >He watched helplessly as she fell once again. She fell again and again, and he was never quick enough. He was always too slow to save her, to stop her from being torn asunder. He saw his brother turn from him and begin a campaign of blood and death. He saw his father kill his only friend. He saw the axe descend, the slow-motion spray of blood as skin parted and bone shattered. He saw every face of every person he killed, heard the screams of every soul he couldn't save.<p>

Every sight, every sound took something. He no longer desired peace, love or anything else. Every time he held himself to a higher ideal someone died for him. His mercy had killed more people than it had saved. It was time for that to end. It was no time for peace. Only death awaited him, and he would not go gentle into that good night. He would burn and rave at close of day, and rage at the dying of the light, for the lights of his life were now all gone.

><p>It was less than a minute before Stoick woke once more, but as he rose to his feet, he knew what had to be done, son or not.<p>

"Gobber, I know you have always had a loose interpretation of my orders, and usually I respect you for it. But now, I want you to listen very carefully, and then do exactly what I say. No ifs, no buts, and no questions. Got it?"

"Aye Chief. Are ye sure you're all right?" Gobber was beginning to grow concerned, he had never seen his friend faint before, not ever. Mind you, it wasn't every day that your son rose from the dead, so maybe he was due a little slack.

"Fine. Go to Gothi's, move the dragon-loving hellspawn to the gaol. Strip his weapons and tools. I want him waking up and knowing that we know about him."

"Ah think he might'a figured that when he saw ye smash that beasties head in."

Seeing the look in his chief's eye he was quick to start hobbling off.

"Dinnae worry yerself, ah'll do it. Damn shame, the boy woulda made a mighty fine smith.."

Stoick wasn't sure he was meant to hear the last bit but he shrugged it off and turned to the rest of the Vikings and started directing them.

"Ack, you go with Gobber. The rest of you get thisâ€¦ whatever _this_ is to the forge, and get rid of this body. We don't need a dragon stinking in the streets. Those not involved, get back to work. There is always rebuilding to be doing."

As he turned to leave, he was accosted by Fishlegs, who was blocking his path.

"Chief, sir. Can I use the body first? We've never had a chance to study a Night Fury. Maybe I can learn its' weaknesses, or just anything about them. Are their teeth poisonous, their claws, anything? The Book has nothing on them."

Stoick took only a moment to decide before acquiescing.

"Two conditions â€" you do it outside the village, and you have the twins as helpers"

Seeing Fish's face crumple at the thought of working with the twins Stoick couldn't help but laugh. As he headed off back to the village main he called over his shoulder.

"Don't worry, if they give you any trouble you can just throw them down the well."

He missed the glimmer of evil delight that appeared on the faces of everyone who heard his comment.

* * *

><p>After dumping Hiccup in the village gaol, Gobber and Ack were musing over some of the more interesting things they'd found in Hiccup's possessions. They had been entranced by the map-book thing, there was a fold-out that covered the whole archipelago and others that covered lands they had never heard of. They didn't realise it, but they were looking at one of the most comprehensive maps of the world that existed at the time. Taking the archipelago foldout, Gobber tossed the rest of the book into a corner.<p>

"You reckon Johann'll be interested in them maps then?" asked Ack, more interested in the cylindrical object he was toying with than any bits of paper.

"Aye, ye ever known him to turn down new trade routes?" was Gobber's answer, equally disinterested and thoroughly absorbed in the tailfin mechanisms. He vaguely recognized some of the designs, but couldn't for the life of him figure out where he'd seen them beforeâ€|

He was rudely interrupted from his musings by a _snap-hiss_ followed by a pained gurgle. Whirling round, he could barely believe his eyes.

Ack was still holding the cylindrical object, but something had changed. What looked like the outline of a sword had shot out and caught fire. This by itself was disturbing enough, but what it had shot out through was Ack's throat. Ack turned a pained and confused grimace towards his friend before sagging to his knees and keeling over. As his grip slackened the sword-thing retracted back into the hilt.

Gobber could only stand in shock. He had seen people die before, many in more horrific ways, but they had always been sort of expected. They were Vikings, people died all the time. What wasn't common was someone going from chatting idly to being dead while in his forge. It was a good few moments before he pulled himself together. Gathering the damned object he closed the forge and headed off in search of his chief. The demon-cursed child had been back less than one day and his inventions had already killed someone.

* * *

><p>So, we have the first Viking death. It begins.

P.s, sorry about the formatting issues the first time around, fixed it now I hope.

8. Chapter 71

Hiccup groaned as he rolled onto his side.

"Man, I feel like I've been hit by a gronckleâ€| Hey bud, I had the worstâ€|.."

His voice trailed off as his eyes adjusted enough to make out his surroundings. He was in a very poorly lit cell, somewhere he'd only ever been once before. The implications of this hit him hard.

He was gone.

Toothless had been the first friend Hiccup had ever had. Toothless had shown him what it meant to be alive, that there was more than the drudgery of his existence back then. It had been Toothless that had given him the confidence (and the wherewithal) to leave Berk behind and truly start his life. It had been Toothless who'd decided to chase down the wyrm that had led them to _Her_. Toothless was the reason he survived losing _Her_. He and Toothless were more than friends, closer than battle-brothers. They had been two perfectly complimenting souls, each an extension of the other. They had flown into the unknown, and challenged the world together. It wasn't possible for Toothless to truly be goneâ€¦ He just couldn't beâ€¦

As all coherent thought left his mind, Hiccup sank to his knees and slowly started keening.

>Had anyone been listening, they would have heard a dragon crying for his nest-mate. As they had done before he met Toothless, Hiccup's cries went unanswered.<p>

**Figured you deserved a little something as I haven't been posting recently. The next full chapter will be up by Christmas day at the latest. **

End
file.